



Strategic Studies Institute



**THE TROUBLED PATH  
TO THE PENTAGON'S RULES  
ON MEDIA ACCESS TO THE BATTLEFIELD:  
Grenada To Today**

Pascale Combelles-Siegel

U.S. Army War College



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**Pascale Combelles-Siegel**

**May 15, 1996**

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This monograph presents preliminary findings of a study on the process towards a new DoD doctrine on Public Affairs and the implications of this doctrine for military-media relations on the battlefield. The John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation graciously funded this study.

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## FOREWORD

Relations between the United States military and the American press soured during the Vietnam War. Many factors contributed to the mistrust that grew between the armed forces and the press, and blame can be laid on many doorsteps.

Since the Vietnam era, military-media relations have evolved to a far less hostile state. Today, perhaps chiefly as a result of successful operations since Vietnam, there is much greater mutual respect. Yet, an undertone of wariness lies just beneath the surface.

In the following monograph, Ms. Pascale Combelles-Siegel examines the difficult road traveled by the press and the military since Operation URGENT FURY in 1983. She focuses on the development of the 1992 Joint Doctrine for Public Affairs as a practical tool for reducing tension and providing press access to the battlefield. Her analysis reflects the duality of the relationship and the efforts of both communities to find a *modus vivendi*.

In the Information Age, media-military relations will become even more complex, and their impact on U.S. strategy, doctrine, and operations will grow. For that reason, the Strategic Studies Institute urges careful consideration of this monograph.



RICHARD H. WITHERSPOON  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

PASCALE COMBELLES-SIEGEL is an associate with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Sur l'Armee at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Toulouse and a visiting researcher at the Center for International Security Studies at the University of Maryland at College Park. In February 1995, she received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation for the research behind this paper, which was presented in an earlier form at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Baltimore, Maryland, October 22, 1995. She is currently completing her Ph.D. dissertation which examines U.S. military-media relations since Vietnam. Ms. Combelle-Siegel has published articles in both Europe and the United States (most recently an article on media-military relations during Just Cause in the May-June 1995 *Military Review*). In addition, she has presented papers at numerous conferences on both sides of the ocean. She holds a bachelor's degrees in history from Universite de Toulouse and a bachelor's degree in political science from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Toulouse, as well as a master's degree in political science from the Universite de Toulouse.

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## **SUMMARY**

This monograph documents and analyzes the new Department of Defense (DoD) policy regarding media access to the battlefield. These rules are of the utmost importance as they will affect the prism (media reporting) through which the world sees the events of each major crisis involving U.S. military forces. They result, in part, from the first attempt to negotiate a mutually satisfactory compromise between the military and the media on press coverage on the battlefield.

Since Grenada, the question of media access to the battlefield has regularly generated some form of controversy between the press and the military, as journalists and editors regularly complained about military control over information. After each major operation, the Pentagon conducted a review of military-media relations and tried to institutionalize (then to improve) a viable system for granting access to the battlefield: the Department of Defense News Media Pool (DoDNMP).

This arrangement, however, has not satisfied the media. First, the DoDNMP appeared to journalists as a convenient means to limit (rather than grant) media access to the battlefield. Second, the pool concept has proved to be cumbersome in terms of logistics and has limited journalists' ability to react to events. These drawbacks were particularly evident in the Gulf War. CENTCOM used the pool system to control the large number of journalists but did not provide adequate logistical support to ensure timely transmission of pool products. After the war, and for the first time, the media—as an institution—demanded to be part of a review process. Beginning in September 1991, a group of five media representatives and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (Pete Williams) began to meet to elaborate new and common ground rules for media coverage of combat operations. In May 1992, after 8 months of negotiations, the

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Pentagon announced the first “agreement on war coverage guidelines.” The agreement soon became a DoD regulation and is now the basis for drafting the first Joint Doctrine for Public Affairs.

Both the military and the media greeted the 1992 rules as opening a new era in military-media relations. Written to avoid the problems that emerged in the Gulf War, the 1992 agreement and the draft directive propose some important changes to the procedures implemented in the past decade. The two main achievements of these new rules consist in abolishing the principle of exclusive pool coverage as a standard means for granting access and in replacing the process of security review by the process of security at the source to protect operational security. Without diminishing the value of those improvements, the rules and the draft policy have serious shortcomings. These include several important questions, such as numerical limitation on reporters assigned to cover military operations; live coverage of battlefield operations; multinational media access to U.S. military operations; and media access to multinational operations. Failure to address these issues might invalidate the progress contained in the 1992 agreement and to be promulgated in the draft DoD directive.

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## **THE TROUBLED PATH TO THE PENTAGON'S RULES ON MEDIA ACCESS TO THE BATTLEFIELD: GRENADA TO TODAY**

The question of media access to the battlefield exploded like a bomb on Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in October 1983. As U.S. forces invaded the small Caribbean island to overthrow the revolutionary government and protect U.S. citizens, no journalists were able to deliver first-hand reports until 2 1/2 days after the operation had begun. But if the fighting was not covered live, the battle over restrictions on the press was played out in real-time—on editorial pages and talk shows all across America.

For the next 10 years, controversy over military restrictions on press access to military operations regularly erupted. During this period, various attempts to define viable and mutually satisfactory rules on media access to military operations failed. Most of these efforts concentrated on how to accommodate growing numbers of journalists during combat operations, as the military is reluctant to grant journalists unlimited access to the battlefield.<sup>1</sup> In 1992, after 8 months of negotiations, the Department of Defense and representatives from five major media organizations signed a formal agreement on media access to the battlefield.

This monograph first frames the debate by reviewing the demands and desires of both sides (the military and the media<sup>2</sup>) that led them to engage in the process of making rules on media access. The next section reviews the abortive attempts through the 1980s to institutionalize a viable system for granting media access to operations. This review serves as the background to an explanation as to why these various attempts have largely failed (for combat military operations at least). The highly-publicized failures during

DESERT STORM led to a concerted media effort to change the situation, which resulted in the 1992 agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD) and media representatives. Based, in part, on the contents of this agreement, the Department of Defense has been developing a doctrine on public affairs. Three years later, this doctrine and related DoD directives remain in draft form. Sadly, these drafts show many of the same weaknesses of the 1992 agreement. In conclusion, this paper highlights these problems and suggests some recommendations for reform that will improve media coverage of the battlefield.

### **Framing the Debate.**

*Press Principles: From Dreams to Reality.* In the aftermath of Grenada, the major U.S. media and professional associations<sup>3</sup> demanded that the U.S. Government (and, more specifically, the military) accommodate the press in 'wartime' situations. Their rationale was twofold. They first claimed that the press had always been present whenever U.S. troops had been involved in combat operations around the world, even when high stakes and great danger were involved. In the "Statement of Principles on Press Access to Military Operations" adopted in January 1984, they asserted: "Since the Revolutionary War, American journalists have always been allowed to cover U.S. troops in action."<sup>4</sup> Many of the articles and reports on the journalists' inability to cover URGENT FURY referred to the 27 journalists who accompanied the first wave of soldiers landing on the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944.<sup>5</sup>

Second, the press argued that the tradition of journalists accompanying soldiers on the battlefield was a key pillar of American democracy—media presence serves the people's right to know. The essence of this argument is that the tradition of free press had made the United States of America one of the strongest nations in the world, and there was no need to change it.<sup>6</sup> As time went by and severe limitations on access replaced exclusion, as in Panama or in the Gulf War, the press shifted its focus from the first

argument (tradition) to the second (democratic values) to compel the DoD toward more openness. For example, in a letter of protest sent to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney in April 1991, major news organizations argued:

Our sense is that virtually all major news organizations agree that the flow of information to the public was blocked, impeded or diminished by the policies and practices of the DoD. Pools did not work. Stories and pictures were late or lost. Access to the men and women in the field was interfered with by a needless system of military escorts and security review. These conditions meant that we could not tell the public the full story of those who fought the nation's battle.<sup>7</sup>

During this decade, a small minority of press activists argued that military restrictions on press access violated the First Amendment.<sup>8</sup> Those activists, generally leaning to the left of the political spectrum, sued the DoD in two cases. In 1984, publisher Larry Flynt challenged the constitutionality of the press's ban. He argued that the Defense Department had violated his First Amendment rights when it prevented his reporters from traveling to Grenada for the purpose of gathering news.<sup>9</sup> The suit occurred well after the operation was over, and the judge decided the case was moot and refused to make a ruling. In February 1991, a group of 10 magazines led by *The Nation* also sued the DoD. The plaintiffs claimed that "the press has a First Amendment right to unlimited access to a foreign arena in which American military forces are engaged. Plaintiffs urge that the DoD 'pooling' regulations, which limit access to the battlefield to a specified number of press representatives and subject them to certain restrictions, infringe on news gathering privileges accorded by the First Amendment."<sup>10</sup> As in the previous case, the judge decided in March that the case was no longer valid because the war had ended.

These two arguments, however, do not stand up to scrutiny. In terms of tradition, the press must have examined history with rose-colored glasses, as bans and exclusions have existed all along. During World War I, General John Pershing initially limited the number of accredited reporters to 31 and barred them from traveling

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to the front lines.<sup>11</sup> During World War II, journalists did not observe first-hand many important battles, including the Battle of Midway, the defense of Bastogne during the Bulge campaign, or the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.<sup>12</sup> Even in Vietnam, so dear to the memory of journalists, certain actions and zones were regularly off-limits to journalists (there was for example, a general ban on reporters on Thai bases).<sup>13</sup> What made the issue more sensitive in Grenada is that the exclusion from a battle meant exclusion from the whole war.

The credibility of the media's argument was also shaken when the public, which the press claims to serve, did not show strong support for the battle against the administration's media policy in Grenada. As various polls indicated soon after the operation, 52 percent approved the limitations on press access to Grenada; 64 percent believed the justifications given by the administration (troop security) and only 25 percent believed press restrictions occurred because the Reagan administration wanted to manipulate the public,<sup>14</sup> and 47 percent approved of excluding the press until the mission was achieved (as actually happened).<sup>15</sup> At the time, the support for Reagan's policy in the particular context of Grenada appeared to be a vote of no-confidence for the press.<sup>16</sup> However, most Americans still approved of the general principles of media access to the battlefield, with 76 percent considering that media presence on the battlefield benefits the nation.<sup>17</sup> Even more impressively, 83 percent considered that in a free country like the United States, one of the most important liberties is to be informed of events, especially when soldiers' lives are at stake.<sup>18</sup>

*Military Realism.* The military, on the other hand, chose the path of realism for dealing with the controversy. Despite the absence of a successful legal challenge and with clear public support for both the military intervention and the ban on the press, the military nonetheless chose to negotiate with the press. General John Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had two principal motivations for taking this path.

First, in the wake of the Grenada controversy, the DoD recognized as one of its prime responsibilities the necessity “to make timely and accurate information” available to the public, Congress, and the news media.<sup>19</sup> Second, the military believed that URGENT FURY had received bad (i.e., negative) coverage from the press and attributed this to the exclusion of the press during the combat phase of the operation. Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, who commanded the operation, believes the press ban was counterproductive because, as a result, “the media expended more column inches and time defending their prerogatives than in reporting the story.”<sup>20</sup> He believes that, due to this, the public

was deprived of the story of the part that American pride, ingenuity, training in fighting fundamentals, and luck played in the success of the Grenada rescue operation . . . Actually all the public really cares in the long-term is that we won. Nevertheless, pundits and anchor-men still talk about Grenada in terms of failure. There is an ethos that surrounds ‘Urgent Fury’ which denies that in both a military and strategic sense all objectives were realized.

Michael Burch, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA)), also considers the press’s exclusion as a mistake: “A combination of mistrust, poor planning, and poor execution on the part of the commander who did not realize that it would have helped the image of the operation and helped gather international support for the operation.”<sup>21</sup> Navy Captain Robert Sims, then a spokesman for the National Security Council, also views the press ban as responsible for the perceived bad press the operation received. “Because the press was excluded, the operation received unfavorable reporting, even though it was a staunch success.”<sup>22</sup>

### **A Series of Abortive Attempts to Find Compromise.**

During the 9 years from Grenada (1983) to 1992, the Pentagon engaged in negotiations and unilateral actions to try to improve media access to the battlefield. All the

attempts, however, fell short of creating a system satisfactory to all concerned.

The first attempt came in the aftermath of the Grenada controversy, when General Vessey convened a bipartisan commission presided over by Retired U.S. Army Major General Winant Sidle. General Vessey tasked the Sidle Military-Media Relations Panel to answer the following question: "How do we conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of the operations while keeping the American public informed through the media?"<sup>23</sup> The commission made the first attempt to define rules that would ensure a media presence on the battlefield, declaring: "It is essential that the U.S. news media cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces."<sup>24</sup> This introductory statement went far beyond the mandate of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as it set into principle that the presence of the media was essential to the dissemination of information. This change of focus shifted the debate from how to make information available, to the question of how to accommodate press presence. (Today the debate is still framed in these terms.) To implement this principle, the commission made the following recommendations:

- Public affairs planning should begin as soon as operational planning begins.
- When it appears that news media pooling is the only way of granting access to the early phase of an operation, a pool should be used until full coverage is possible.
- The Secretary of Defense should study the possibility of a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required.

- The basic principle governing media access should be compliance with predetermined ground rules issued by the military.
- Public Affairs should plan for adequate logistical support, including communications and transport.<sup>25</sup>

After the report's release, the DoD began implementing some of the recommendations. The Department first instructed the Commanders-in-Chief (CINCs) to begin planning public affairs when they began operational planning. Then, the Department continued to work on its proposal of creating a national pool to avoid repeating Grenada-like situations.<sup>26</sup> In September 1984, ASD(PA) Michael Burch announced to 10 media organizations, much to their amazement, that they were part of the newly-created DoD National News Media Pool (DoDNMP).

The DoDNMP is designed to ensure media coverage of the early phases of a U.S. military operation in a remote place where no journalists are present (as was the case during Grenada) while maintaining operational security and troop safety. The military is willing to use pools as long as operational security is not threatened. And the press is willing to participate if the pool ensures media presence and first-hand reporting from the battlefield. The national media pool functions according to the following principles:

- It is a noncompetitive pool. News organizations participating in the pool agree to share all information and products with the rest of the media industry.
- Reporters must obey escorts' orders. They cannot break away from the pool.
- They cannot directly communicate with their organizations and can only file via military equipment.
- They must follow ground rules and guidelines.<sup>27</sup>
- They are subject to security review.

- They are expected to ask for media opportunities.<sup>28</sup>

Over the next years, the Department regularly exercised the pool. The exercises had a rocky start. For example, during exercise UNIVERSAL TREK in Honduras (April 1985), which featured an amphibious landing and a simulated strike against a guerrilla force, word of the exercise leaked within hours after the pool's activation.<sup>29</sup> During Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama (December 1989), the *Time Magazine* bureau chief violated security guidelines when he discussed with reporters the decision as to who would go on the pool assignment at a Christmas Party.<sup>30</sup> In the first exercise (UNIVERSAL TREK), the military did not have adequate communication facilities to file pool products back to Washington in a timely manner, and reporters had to wait 2 days to file their copy. During later exercises, the military established a routine that enabled three 600-word messages to be transmitted within 2 hours of the pool's arrival.<sup>31</sup> However, this arrangement proved too limited for actual operations. Finally, reporters soon felt these exercises were not newsworthy enough. In a meeting between DoD officials and media representatives, the reporters explained that their organizations were investing enormous amounts of money in the pool (ranging from overtime salaries to new, light-weight equipment) and that they desired that the exercises would be newsworthy in themselves.<sup>32</sup> This complaint highlights one other major difference between the military and the media. The military prepares for actual use through frequent and repetitive training. It devotes large resources for this purpose. This is not the case, however, for the media. For the most part, a journalist's conception of training is learning on the beat. The idea of devoting time, personnel and money just to train is a luxury most media outlets don't believe they can afford. However, media organizations continued training coverage and, after a while, both the military and the media on the pool's roster grew accustomed to each other and relations improved as exercises continued.

The national pool was first used in an actual operation during EARNEST WILL in 1987-88.<sup>33</sup> The operation was

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designed to register certain Kuwaiti ships (mainly tankers) under the American flag and have them escorted from the Strait of Hormuz to Kuwait by the U.S. Navy. The goal was to protect the freedom of the seas by deterring Iran from attacking nonbelligerents' tankers in the Persian Gulf and deter further Soviet involvement in the region. The Secretary of Defense decided to activate the national media pool to cover the first escort mission which began on July 24, 1987. Commander Middle East Forces, Rear Admiral Harold Bernsen, USN, in charge of the operation, only reluctantly agreed to the arrangement.<sup>34</sup> When the *Bridgeton*, one of the two Kuwaiti ships escorted in this first mission, hit a mine on July 25, 1987, "the first account to arrive at the Pentagon was Associated Press reporter Richard Pyle's. The arrangement was a resounding success for everybody."<sup>35</sup> From that point, regional pools were regularly brought to U.S. Navy ships. The main success, however, was to put a pool aboard the ships involved in the attack of two Iranian frigates during Operation PRAYING MANTIS on April 18, 1988.<sup>36</sup> Dan Howard, then ASD(PA), recalled that it was very difficult to convince the military leadership to put a press pool on the U.S. ships scheduled to engage the Iranian frigates.

We spent several hours with Admiral Crowe (CJCS), discussing this matter. On Saturday [April 16, 1988], I was called again by Carlucci; Crowe and others were at Carlucci's house. Again we discussed the issue. Again I made my point. Carlucci confirmed my decision to have a press pool on board. But the military's plan was to put the pool on a lower-risk operation (on the ship that would attack an oil-platform). But, I insisted on having the pool on the ship that would engage the Iranian frigates in real combat—the most dangerous situation. Admiral Crowe and Secretary Carlucci made the courageous decision to support putting the pool in the most dangerous situation.<sup>37</sup>

Overall, the use of the press pool during EARNEST WILL proved mutually satisfactory.

The next operational use of the pool system came in December 1989 with the invasion of Panama (Operation

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JUST CAUSE).<sup>38</sup> But in this case, it failed miserably, as pool members arrived too late to witness the actual combat operations while independent journalists were detained on Howard Air Force Base to protect the privileges of a pool which could not accomplish its mission. Instead of being taken to the fighting, the pool received a series of briefings from U.S. Embassy personnel, who did not have any up-to-date military information. For the first day, during which all the major fighting occurred, SOUTHCOM consistently took the pool away from the action. SOUTHCOM had made no provisions to link the pool with combat units prior to the assault. When the pool arrived in Panama, military personnel refused to take reporters into the combat zone.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, because the media center was poorly equipped, the pool could not file adequately nor in a timely manner with their news organizations. It took the entire first day to fax print reports to Washington because of a faulty fax machine at the Pentagon. Photographic products arrived in Washington 4 days after the initial assault.

The renewed controversy led Pete Williams, ASD(PA), to charge Fred Hoffman<sup>40</sup> to conduct a review of the Panama pool's failure. Hoffman put much of the blame on Secretary of Defense Cheney for his excessive concern over secrecy and made 17 recommendations to avoid repeating the failure. Hoffman first insisted on the importance of adequate planning for the pool. He recommended that Public Affairs Annex to Operational Planning (Annex F) actually be written and that a "Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs should closely monitor development of operation-related public affairs plans to assure they fulfill all requirements for pool coverage."<sup>41</sup> He also advised that Public Affairs personnel as well as personnel from policy offices be involved in the planning process at the very earliest stages. He stated that they needed to weigh in aggressively with the Secretary of Defense and the CJCS to argue against secrecy and in favor of the pool. He also recommended some inner changes in the pool procedures: training sessions with units most likely to be sent on emergency contingency operations; dividing the 12-member

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pool into sub-groups to cover a wide range of operations; briefings on the military situation; and adequate communication outlets.

On March 30, 1990, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued new planning guidance for Public Affairs which determined the relationship between the CINC and OASD(PA) as well as the CINC's responsibilities in terms of public affairs. *JCS Pub 5-02.2*, "Annex F, Public Affairs Guidance," instructs the CINCs to coordinate all public affairs activities with ASD(PA) to ensure that they will provide a maximum flow of information to the public. This directive sets a chain of communication for direction and guidance between ASD (PA) and the CINCs. Under this directive, the CINCs were delegated authority to issue the appropriate public affairs instructions, provide policy guidance for all public affairs activities, prepare adequate communication and transport support "unless unavoidable military necessity, with respect to the mission and/or safety of the U.S. Armed Forces, requires all available assets," and ensure the implementation of all DoD public affairs policy and programs.<sup>42</sup>

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait 5 months later, on August 2, 1990, and the massive U.S. response (Operation DESERT SHIELD) provided a real test for the new guidance. Sadly, the process mainly failed the test and reinvigorated the debates over media access to U.S. military operations. After Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, DoD activated the national pool to cover the opening phase of Operation DESERT SHIELD. For the first 3 weeks, the pool's operation satisfied both the military and the media. The media gained access to a situation it could not otherwise cover (no western reporters were in Saudi Arabia). The military was able to ensure positive coverage of operations in Saudi Arabia—without hinting at the weaknesses of the military deployments. Things began to go awry when operations went on and moved from a defensive posture to an offensive one. The system for granting access to these operations resulted in a litany of press complaints.

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Two main problems stirred controversy with the press. First, only about 10 percent of the reporters enrolled on the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) rosters in Dhahran, Riyadh and Jubail ever made it to the front lines.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, those few 'elected' members of the press did not choose what they wanted to cover, but the military put them where slots were available. Many in the press felt that the military acted as a 'super editor,' attacking them in the essence of their job: their ability to select the story. With CENTCOM's approach, reporters were assigned to units they did not want to cover and missed opportunities they would have liked to cover. "While the pool has been used very successfully to provide coverage of key events that would go uncovered if it were not for the military transporting pools to the appropriate location at the correct time, the control of access in all areas creates the impression that the military has something to hide."<sup>44</sup>

In all fairness, it needs to be said that Colonel William Mulvey (USA), Director of the JIB in Dhahran, was hardly in a position to 'select' the news for the press. Under constant pressure from the numerous journalists roaming the international hotel, he spent most of his time trying to convince military units to take more journalists in. Moreover, the logistical job of providing to the press enough "newsworthy spots" with regularity was almost impossible to fulfill. The military will never be able to match the press's ability to pick newsworthy events, go from one to the next, and leave an unworthy spot in time to go to a newsworthy one.

The second main problem was the lack of dedicated transport and logistic support for filing the stories back to Dhahran in a timely manner. During the 4-day ground war, the military relied on a "pony-express"<sup>45</sup> system for communicating the pool products back from the battlefield to the rear headquarters in Dhahran. In theory, pool products were to be sent via military transport (essentially vehicles or helicopters) from the battlefield to Dhahran, and then back to the United States. In practice, military transport proved extremely unreliable. Examples of faulty

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transmission abound. "One reporter's copy took as long as two weeks to make the eight hour drive from the battlefield to Dhahran. A news photographer's film took thirty-six days. A television correspondent's videotape of two stories never made it back."<sup>46</sup> Overall, the Pentagon recognized the slowness of its system. According to Title V, the DoD's report to Capitol Hill, only 21 percent of the pool products arrived at Dhahran in less than 12 hours during the ground war, while 69 percent arrived in less than 2 days. Thus, much of it arrived after the ground offensive was over and was never used in news accounts.<sup>47</sup>

### **Explaining the Pool's Failure.**

Over the past decade, the DoD has developed a procedure to ensure that the media would be granted access to combat operations: the pool. However, the results from its use in combat operations have shown only mixed results. The concept worked during EARNEST WILL and essentially during the first weeks of DESERT SHIELD, but failed in the two major and most newsworthy events of the decade: JUST CAUSE and DESERT STORM.

The creation of the national pool in 1985 has led the DoD to overuse and misuse the pooling concept for coverage of combat operations. The national pool was correctly used for the first escort mission of EARNEST WILL. At that time, no media was in the region to cover the operation. Journalists could not make it to the scene on their own, and the military operations (aboard ship) physically could not handle numerous journalists. For the same reason, DoD correctly activated the national pool at the beginning of DESERT SHIELD. However, during the decade, the pool concept was overused in circumstances unacceptable to the press. For example, DoD sent the national pool during Operation NIMROD DANCER (the movement of military reinforcements to Panama after Noriega fraudulently annulled the presidential election results in May 1989) to send a signal of conciliation to the media community, whereas many reporters were already in Panama.<sup>48</sup> The national pool was also misused during Operation JUST

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CAUSE, because reporters were already located in Panama and should have been gathered in a local pool or left to report unilaterally on the situation.<sup>49</sup> Finally, CENTCOM created a pooling system to cover all the phases of Operation DESERT STORM as a means of controlling a swarm of journalists. This abusive employment of the pool aggravated media-military tensions.

For the press, the pool is only a poor alternative to no coverage at all.<sup>50</sup> The press generally has accepted being part of a pool (whether national or regional<sup>51</sup>) when it did not have ready access to the theater of operations, as was the case during EARNEST WILL and in the first three weeks of DESERT SHIELD. Some in the military, on the other hand, have viewed the pool as the perfect way to limit the number of journalists in theater. The military has never accepted a large number of reporters in theater for various reasons, ranging from operational security to political concerns to availability of resources (space and accommodations). But resorting to pools to limit the number of journalists creates controversy because it derails the pool concept from its original mission to implement one that is unacceptable to the press. Each time the Pentagon has used the pool in instances other than the minimal circumstances accepted by the press, journalists have angrily complained. Obviously, the military cannot go on using the 'pool concept' as a way to limit the numbers of journalists on the battlefield in combat operations, unless it is willing to take the heat. This issue needs to be worked out with the press.

The pool concept, as developed and implemented so far, mostly addresses military concerns and not the media's. DoD established the national pool to meet three objectives:

- To make sure that it was possible to activate a small group of journalists without endangering operational security. To achieve this objective, DoD has established a series of guidelines to enable secret activation of the pool. It has also imposed a system of security review applicable to all pool material, so that

journalists would not improperly write about forbidden information.

- To make sure that the pool was transported to an event.
- To make sure that communication facilities were available to file pool products in a timely manner.<sup>52</sup>

These objectives, however, fail to address the major press concern: satisfactory access to operations. Indeed, obtaining access to real combat operations through pools has been a challenge. This requires that journalists be attached to combat units prior to the beginning of operations. In turn, this requires that a long and successful planning process take public affairs into account. This is not a condition easy to fulfill. In Panama, the planning process was so haphazard that pool members were not hooked-up with units. As a result, they did not witness any combat operations. During DESERT STORM, some of the combat units of the air war (the B-52 bombers) did not receive a single journalist. And during the ground war, many of the Army units (mostly in the VII Corps) did not have any reporters with them.

In general, the DoD national pool system has been unable to solve these problems. More dramatically, it may have made them worse. Whether pools exist or not, commanders will always have the prerogative to expel or discourage journalists from covering their units. The military may deny journalists access to units for a variety of reasons ranging from operational security to dislike of the press to outright political objectives.<sup>53</sup> But, the pooling system creates a process which insulates journalists from commanders—therefore reducing the pressure media personnel can put on the military. Moreover, the system also gives the military an opportunity to (try to) direct media coverage. Indeed, when left to define media opportunities for the press, the military can choose, and has chosen, angles that favor the official version of events. During URGENT FURY, the military tailored the press visits to show them the involvement of the Soviets on Grenada. During JUST CAUSE, SOUTHCOM created media opportunities that

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had little informative value or that showed Noriega's evil side. During DESERT STORM, the military created slots among the units which accepted journalists. As a result, some journalists sat (almost idly) with units where nothing interesting was happening, while some units whose commanders had refused any media presence did not receive any coverage. The military is a bad editor and such a job should be left to those who do it best: the media.

In addition, the pool concept is cumbersome and limits improvisation. It is cumbersome because it requires enormous logistical support—in terms of personnel, transport, accommodations, and communications. Experience has shown that the military cannot easily meet those requirements. Indeed, public affairs logistics derives from operational logistics. In the priorities of a commander, public affairs always are a lower priority than operations. Moreover, logistical support can only be devoted to public affairs if planning has occurred soon enough and has developed without problems. Those two requirements have not always been met. For example, in Panama the national pool's activation was announced so late that no adequate logistical support could be diverted from the operation.<sup>54</sup> During DESERT SHIELD, General Schwarzkopf made it clear that public affairs was not his priority. Navy Captain Mike Sherman, who established the JIB in Dhahran from scratch, said he was provided no equipment and little manpower. He also stated that it was 4-6 weeks before CENTCOM issued a message to the field directing units to cooperate with and support the JIB. Reflecting on his establishment of the JIB, he concluded: "We were the bastard children of the operation."<sup>55</sup>

The system is so cumbersome that it also largely freezes improvisation. Indeed, when a sudden newsworthy event occurs, the pool is rarely prepared and equipped to move quickly to the site of the event. The battle of Khafji, during the Gulf War, offers a typical example of how difficult it can be to manage the pool system. The battle, which occurred at the end of January, was an Iraqi attempt to force the U.S. military to engage in a bloody ground battle. A few hours

after the battle began, some independent reporters, called "unilaterals" in the Gulf War, were on the scene, trying to figure out what was happening. Back in Dhahran, news broke that "something" was going on and that "unilaterals" were on the scene. Journalists assailed Colonel Mulvey, head of the Dhrahan JIB, with requests to form a pool to go. By the time the military was prepared to send a pool, the battle was essentially over. The incident suggests two hindsights. First, the public affairs community's ability to move journalists quickly to respond to this type of breaking news is low. Second, under such circumstances, the military public affairs system cannot compete with the media in responsiveness.

Finally, the resort to an exclusive, all-pool system to cover combat operations has exacerbated planning and coordination problems. And when pooling activities did not go as planned or expected, it left little room for improvement. In spite of recommendations by both Sidle and Hoffman, public affairs planning has not been effective.

The first problem lies in compartmented planning. "Compartmentalization" means that only people who "need to know" are brought into the planning process. Public affairs officers are generally not part of those considered by senior leaders and key staff officers and planners to be essential for operational planning. They too often are perceived as not having a "need to know." Until Grenada, it was very common during the planning process to leave the public affairs annex (Annex F) essentially blank, with the line "to be provided"—but it rarely was. Both the Sidle commission and the Hoffman report recommended that public affairs planning begin at the onset of operational planning. And after Panama, a DoD directive made the recommendation the policy. But public affairs continued to be considered a low priority for operational commanders. Almost no public affairs planning accompanied DESERT SHIELD. And during DESERT STORM, the low priority given to public affairs translated into chaos.

Second, the resort to the pool concept has created some antagonistic relations between the Office of the Assistant

Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD-PA) and commanders who are responsible for public affairs activities in their area of responsibility (AOR). Over the decade, OASD-PA has seemed to be receptive to the media's concerns over access. However, this office has rarely been able to impose its views on commanders.<sup>56</sup> The problem stems from the fact that OASD-PA is not part of the chain of command. It therefore cannot order a commander to take more reporters or allow a unit to be cooperative to the press. It gives guidance, not orders. Unless the Secretary of Defense takes public affairs seriously and backs his assistant for public affairs, OASD-PA has little authority over what happens in the real world.

### **The Post-Gulf War Measures.**

The heated controversy between the military and the press that accompanied the Gulf War led to the first attempt to define and negotiate rules of coverage of military operations. These rules became official policy in 1992 and are now in the process of being translated into a DoD instruction and a joint public affairs doctrine.

*The Statement of DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations.* On April 15, 1991, George Watson, then Vice President of ABC News Washington bureau, organized a meeting of Washington bureau chiefs to discuss media coverage guidelines during the Gulf War. The group involved 15 Washington bureau chiefs concerned that "the flow of information to the public was blocked, impeded or diminished by the policies and practices of the DoD," and expressed apprehension that "the virtual total control that your Department exercised over the American press will become a model for the future."<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, the large group of news organizations designated a working group of five media representatives: Michael Getler (*The Washington Post*), Jonathan Wolman (Associated Press), George Watson (ABC News), later replaced by Barbara Cohen (CBS News), Clark Hoyt (Knight-Ridder Newspapers) and Stanley Cloud (*Time*

*Magazine*). The working group was tasked with writing an assessment of what went wrong in the coverage and media procedures during DESERT STORM. The report concluded: “In the end, the combination of security review and the use of the pool system as a form of censorship made the Gulf War the most undercover major conflict in modern American history. In a free society, there is simply no place for such overwhelming control by the government.”<sup>58</sup> The media group attached a list of ten principles, designed to improve combat coverage, to the report. The following are the key points:

- Open and independent coverage will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.
- Pools will be used to ensure coverage of the first stages of any military operation and will be disbanded after 24 or 36 hours.
- Reporters should be granted access to all major units.
- The military should provide transport and communication assistance to the pool as well as to independent reporters.
- Security review should be abandoned.<sup>59</sup>

On September 12, 1991, the group met with Secretary Cheney to discuss the pitfalls of the Gulf War public affairs procedures. According to Associated Press’s Wolman, the Secretary was very receptive to the media’s complaints and immediately agreed to open negotiations.<sup>60</sup> During the following 8 months, the media working group met regularly with ASD (PA) Williams and his staff to work out new arrangements. The process was long and uneasy. AP’s Jonathan Wolman describes the negotiating process: “We would have a meeting and some issues were raised. Then we would have to go back to the larger group of media organizations. The military leadership would have to go back and discuss some of the issues with the civilian leadership and the CINCs.”<sup>61</sup> Overall, they spent a lot of time settling on phrasing, choosing the word that would

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satisfy both parties, and trying to ‘remove the brackets around controversial expressions.’ Both parties discussed several issues at length. On the most controversial—security review—they finally agreed to disagree.

On May 21, 1992, the Pentagon announced it had adopted new combat coverage principles. The following summarizes the agreed-upon principles:

- Open and independent coverage will be the principal means of covering U.S. military operations.
- Pools will be used when they provide the only feasible means of access to a military operation, when space is limited or for specific events. The arrival of a pool will not cancel independent coverage from journalists already in the area.
- Journalists will be credentialed and required to abide by security ground rules. Non-observance of the rules will result in loss of accreditation. News organizations will make efforts to assign experienced journalists to cover military operations.
- Journalists will be provided access to all major units. Special operations units may have some limitations.
- Public affairs officers will not interfere with reporting.
- The military will be responsible for providing transport and communication facilities for pool journalists. The military will allow independent reporters to ride military vehicles and use communication assets. Commanders will not ban communication systems operated by the media from the battlefield, but will be able to limit their use under certain circumstances.
- The principles apply to the national media pool.
- Both parties agreed to disagree on the issue of security review. The DoD considered it must retain the

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possibility to review all material prior to release in order to maintain tight operational security. The press considered it could not submit to any form of review prior to publication.

The press expressed great satisfaction at the announcement. Speaking for the media group, Louis Boccardi, CEO of Associated Press, said: "It is the consensus of our group that the guidelines offer the promise of the kind of coverage the citizens of a democracy are entitled to have."<sup>62</sup> Stanley Cloud, one of the negotiators, added that the new policy, in general, made "a vast improvement over the system that existed prior to the Gulf war."<sup>63</sup>

*The Elaboration of a DoD Directive for Joint Public Affairs.* In the aftermath of the negotiated agreement between the Pentagon and the media, ASD (PA) Pete Williams decided that the elaboration of a DoD directive and a Joint public affairs doctrine were necessary steps to avoid the pitfalls of the Gulf War. For that purpose, Pete Williams arranged the transfer of U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Charles Ricks to the Pentagon to work on media policy. Ricks was transferred from NATO headquarters where he had been developing public affairs procedures. Charles Ricks (and, since his retirement, Brian Kilgallen [a civilian in the OASD-PA/OATSD-PA])<sup>64</sup> wrote and coordinated the two documents. Both documents are designed for the combatant commanders. The DoD directive sets policy. It documents the tasks to be performed by the various echelons (ASD-PA, JCS, Commanders and military departments) for accommodating reporters during operations and releasing relevant information to the public. A DoD instruction is a longer and more detailed version of a directive. It states the same policy standards. Joint doctrine should derive from the directive and instruction for commanders on how to implement the tasks determined in the directive. The directive and instruction are in a draft form and have not yet been signed by the Secretary of Defense. The joint doctrine seems to be in the second coordination process. According to Kilgallen, in charge of coordination, the joint doctrine should be approved before the end of 1996.

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The current draft of the instruction has taken into account many of the principles that resulted from the 1991-92 negotiations. For example, the instruction stresses that “the primary means of covering U.S. military operations shall be open and independent coverage by properly credentialed news media.”<sup>65</sup> Responding to criticism that emerged during and after the war about public affairs officers impeding reporting, the directive sets the new goal as “to treat the news media as members of units, allowing them to accompany the organizations during the conduct of their mission.”<sup>66</sup> The instruction insists that CINCs grant the maximum access possible to operations, including combat ones. It also seeks to answer some of the media’s concerns about transport and communications assistance. It requires that CINCs “ensure adequate, immediately available dedicated personnel, equipment, transportation, and communications resources to meet the demands for information.”<sup>67</sup> Finally, the instruction sets a new review process for ensuring operational security. In accordance with the agreement, it acknowledges that “formal security review of news media products may be necessary,” but it also institutes another process called “security at the source.” “Under that concept, those meeting with the news media shall ensure that classified information is not revealed.”<sup>68</sup>

The draft instruction also addresses concerns that were not raised during the negotiations, but appeared as major problems during the Gulf War, most notably the planning process and the tasks of various components during this process. Noting that overall success “relies on the coordinated responses of supporting combatant commands, the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and OATSD-PA,” the draft instruction clarifies the role of various components in the process. For example, ASD (PA) is now tasked with “reviewing, coordinating, approving, and disseminating PAG [public affairs guidance], public affairs plans, and public affairs annexes.” In the meantime, JCS is tasked with ensuring “that existing operational public affairs plans comply with published joint public affairs doctrine and guidance.”<sup>69</sup> The CINCs receive

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a much more detailed tasking, under this directive, as they have to “include in operations plans an annex that establishes responsive public affairs organizations and structures and shall provide dedicated personnel, facilities, equipment and transportation, and communications assets to the public affairs mission.”<sup>70</sup>

### **Looking Forward: Appraising the Nature and Degree of Policy Changes.**

It is impossible to definitively state how these policy changes will affect future media coverage of combat operations. Past experience and consideration of future trends suggest reasons for both optimism and pessimism.

*The Regulation of Access.* Both the agreed-on principles and the draft public affairs instruction establish “open and independent coverage” as the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations. Though recommended twice in the past by the Sidle commission (1984) and the Hoffman report (1989), the Pentagon did not endorse this principle until 1992. However, neither the 1992 agreement nor DoD draft instruction provide a satisfactory definition of what “open and independent coverage” precisely means. For most reporters, coverage is open and independent when they can go when they want, where they want and report on what they choose. When asked to define “open and independent coverage,” ABC’s Watson answered: “Vietnam is the best possible in history example that anybody can remember. The country was accessible to news organizations who operated competitively and independently of each other and there were few restrictions on access to any place that one wished to go.”<sup>71</sup> It seems unlikely that anyone in the military shares Watson’s definition, for the simple reason that such open coverage directly conflicts with the military’s desire to attain control of the battlefield. Kilgallen, OATSD-PA, gave the following definition of the principle: “That’s one of the questions that still has not been resolved. I am not sure we resolved it yet or that we will to somebody’s satisfaction.”<sup>72</sup> It seems extremely naive to think that military would just relinquish this objective to satisfy the press’s appetite for

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battlefield news. Moreover, experience shows that most of the military is not enthusiastic about media presence and, left to its discretion, it would rather exclude than include journalists. The lack of a clear definition for “open and independent coverage” just “postpones the dispute and confusion until the next military operation, which is the least desirable time to pursue resolution.”<sup>73</sup>

To reinforce the first principle, both documents stress the military’s obligation to grant access to units involved in operations. Both the agreement and the draft instruction direct that access to all major units and personnel be granted. The DoD draft instruction reads:

Commanders shall ensure that reporters are granted all possible access to all unclassified activities, including combat operations (and) assist news media in gaining access to the full spectrum of U.S. military units and personnel conducting joint and unilateral operations, subject to special operations restrictions. Access includes commanders, staffs, officers and enlisted personnel directly involved with combat and sustainment operations.<sup>74</sup>

For the first time, CINCs are instructed on the extent of access they should provide reporters. This is a major step forward. However, the instruction leaves room for restrictive interpretation. During DESERT STORM, the military felt it had granted access to “all major units” involved. However, journalists, on the other hand, felt that the arrangements for access to units were extremely unsatisfactory. In their post-war assessment, press representatives stated that “there were no pools with the 3rd Armored, 24th Infantry, 101st Airborne, and 1st Infantry division and several other major ground units until just before the ground war.”<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the military’s standard operating procedure leaves the decision on media access to units up to the commander. In last resort, access depends on the commander’s attitude.

*Re-working the Pool Issue.* Both the 1992 agreement and the DoD instruction address the issue of pools. Back in 1984, the Sidle commission suggested the following standards for

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resorting to pools: "When it becomes apparent during operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means for furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before 'full coverage' is feasible."<sup>76</sup> For the first time, the 1992 agreement recommended that this principle become policy.

At the request of the media representatives, the 1992 agreement states that pools will not serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. It suggests that pools should be as large as possible and disbanded within a time limit of 24 to 36 hours. In its current version, the DoD draft instruction is far less precise on the conditions for using pools. It simply states that "the primary means of covering U.S. military operations shall be open and independent coverage by properly credentialed news media. There will be situations, especially in the deployment of joint forces or in support of specific missions, in which the formation of a news media pool shall be the most appropriate public affairs course of action."<sup>77</sup> Unlike the provision of the 1992 agreement, the draft instruction does not set any duration or circumstances limitation on the use of pools. The instruction does not really set any new standards, except the subordination of pool coverage to independent coverage. Although it is not covered in the draft DoD directive, Brian Kilgallen (Plans Officer, OATSD(PA)) insisted that the provisions of the 1992 agreement shape current DoD policy. He stated that, "Pools should be used for a short period of time or for specific actions taking place in remote locations. They are designed to provide coverage that may not otherwise be provided."<sup>78</sup> According to Kilgallen, these details will be in the joint doctrine.

Finally, the 1992 agreement states that "the arrival of early access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area."<sup>79</sup> This principle establishes that pool coverage and independent coverage are compatible. It sharply departs from past Pentagon policy. From Grenada to DESERT

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STORM, DoD constantly granted 'exclusive access' to pool reporters. But, this language raises some questions. When obligated to join a pool, reporters are extremely sensitive to the (unfair) competition from independent reporters. Michael Getler considers that when you have both pool and independent reporters on the same scene, "that's when you get into trouble. That's why we don't want pools in those situations. The kind of situation when you have ten people in a pool and twenty others who aren't in a pool, that says you don't need a pool."<sup>80</sup> The principle is only valid if it means that pools will be activated to cover parts of the operation inaccessible to independent reporters, while unilaterals will cover other parts.

Kilgallen agrees with Getler's interpretation. When asked if pool and independent coverage were compatible, he answered: "Sure. It should be. If it's not, then we have a problem. The doctrine does not state that, but it's implied, because pools are designed to take people to places where other media aren't." He illustrated his point using the following example: "Let's say we are six weeks into an operation, God forbid, there is a certain aspect of that operation where there are no reporters, there is nobody else except military people, then the way to go out there . . . you can't get five hundred or fifteen hundred or three thousand reporters there, but you can take fourteen to represent television, radio, wire services, magazines, newspapers and photo services."<sup>81</sup>

These changes are of the utmost importance. First, the Pentagon now accepts, as a matter of policy, that pools will not serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations any longer. This represents a true step forward. The new policy not only subordinates pools to the principle of open and independent coverage, but also tries to discourage commanders from using pools. Kilgallen noted that pools require significant logistics support and, as well, directly cost DoD money because not all expenditures are reimbursable. Second, the Pentagon and the media agree that pooling should not cancel independent coverage. For once, they share the same interpretation of what is and is

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not compatible. Both parties agree that compatibility means allowing pools to cover parts of operations where independent reporters are not present and can not get to. Both also agree that having pools and independent reporters covering the same action from the same vantage point can create problems. To ensure that commanders fully understand the nature of this change in concept, the DoD draft instruction should be revised to clarify this interpretation—that use of pools and unilaterals to cover the same activity is a less than optimal approach. The issue needs clarification before a large-scale operation makes the problem a front-page item. Provisions should be added in the instruction and the doctrine to provide commanders with guidance on appropriate limits to pool usage.

The applicability of these changes raises some questions. Technically, the draft instruction allows a commander to use pools for coverage of major combat operations without accepting open and independent coverage, on the grounds that pools constitute “the most appropriate means of coverage” but not, necessarily, the only appropriate means of coverage. To rely on pools when independent coverage could work would seem contrary to the policymakers’s intent. However, it could occur and might even be likely, since pools are the only readily available means to limit numbers of reporters. Suppressing the pools as a means of limiting the number of journalists assigned to an operation exposes the U.S. military to the possibility of having to deal with essentially unlimited numbers (hundreds) of reporters in the battlefield environment. As any military commander hopes to minimize the number of uncontrolled variables on the battlefield to limit the extent to which the Clausewitzian concept of friction can affect operations, allowing reporters onto battlefields without any control over numbers or activities is a sub-optimum (at best) choice from a military perspective.

No military has ever granted such access and the U.S. military has always limited the number of reporters allowed to cover combat operations. For example, the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I initially

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accredited only 31 reporters. After journalists bitterly complained to General Pershing, the number of credentialed reporters rose to 60. During World War II, more than 400 reporters were accredited to General Eisenhower's headquarters in London. However, only 27 reporters accompanied the first wave of 500,000 soldiers on D-Day. In comparison, CENTCOM allowed 167 pool reporters to cover the ground offensive (out of over 1,000 present in theater). In the past decade, the U.S. military has used pools to limit the number of reporters on the battlefield. The military has consistently argued that it cannot reasonably deal with the swarm of reporters who want to take a trip to war. In a 1991 statement to the Senate Committee on Government Affairs, ASD(PA) Pete Williams justified the use of pools to cover the war:

As the number of troops in the desert has grown, so has the number of reporters there to cover them. The U.S. and international press corps has gone from zero on August 2 to 17 on the first pool, raising to 800 by mid-December, and it is over 1,400 now. Obviously, most of those reporters, the good ones, want to be out with the troops. They want to be where the action is, just as they have done in previous conflicts. But with the hundreds of fiercely independent reporters seeking to join up with combat units, we concluded that when the combat started we would have to rely on pools.<sup>82</sup>

As long as no limit is placed on the number of reporters assigned to cover military operations, pools will remain the only sensible means to limit access to combat operations. Consequently, there is little hope that the military will commit itself to a definitive limitation on the pools' use in combat-like situations.

*A Troubling Issue: "Security Review" v. "Security at the Source."* For the past 10 years, public affairs officers have reviewed pool material during military combat operations to make sure the reports did not violate operational security ground rules.<sup>83</sup> The process worked as follows: journalists wrote their reports, shot their video and photographs, and handed them to their escorts for review. The escorts then sent the reports to rear headquarters for dispatch or for

further review if the escorts believed they contained a security violation. If no agreement was reached in rear headquarters, the material was sent back to the Pentagon for final adjudication. In last resort, the media decided whether the report should be published or not. Although only five cases ever made it back to the Pentagon during DESERT STORM, and DoD cleared four of them,<sup>84</sup> the security ground rules were not the problem, the process was. Media organizations bitterly complained that the process amounted to censorship by delay. Remembering the experience of the ground war during DESERT STORM, the *Post*'s Getler said: "The time delays in the security review process virtually ensured that whatever they were doing would be done before anybody read about it."<sup>85</sup>

During the negotiation process, the parties could not reach an agreement on the issue of security review. The military felt it had to retain the right to impose security review when circumstances required it, whereas the media negotiators refused to compromise in their stance that news material should not be subject to prior military security review. Media negotiators considered the Pentagon's stance progress, since in "the DoD statement on security review, they went quite a bit further than the way it was defined in the Gulf war. This in itself was progress."<sup>86</sup> DoD's current draft instruction goes even further than the 1992 agreement. It states: "While there may be situations when a formal security review of the news media products may be necessary, the more usual case shall involve the disciplined practice of security at the source."<sup>87</sup>

According to OATSD (PA) Kilgallen, this concept is radically opposed to security review as implemented in the Gulf War. Echoing some of the media's concerns, he considered that security review "is burdensome and almost totalitarian. We are not; we should not be in the business of censoring the news." He then defines how security at the source is radically different. "The person who is briefing the media . . . it is up to this person to make sure that I am not telling the journalist any classified information." This process entrusts military personnel not to divulge classified

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information that could jeopardize operational security. When asked if security review would no longer be implemented, Kilgallen answered: "That's correct."<sup>88</sup>

If Kilgallen's opinion reflects the general DoD interpretation, this is a true step forward with which the media should be satisfied. However, the distinction between security review and security at the source does not appear so well-understood within the military community. This potential confusion raises some concerns. The concern stems from the fact that CENTCOM's guidance called the security review process during DESERT STORM, "security at the source." The January 7, 1991, CENTCOM guidelines for the news media stated: "Security at the source will be the policy. In the event of hostilities, pool products will be subject to security review prior to release to determine if they contain information that would jeopardize an operation or the security of U.S. and coalition forces."<sup>89</sup> Though the mention of "security at the source" disappeared in the January 14 version of the rules, Joint Universal Lessons Learned (JULL) from the war indicated that some public affairs officers considered it policy. For example, one JULL stated that "CENTCOM and command PAOs could not pass CINCSENT guidance and instructions to media escorts and commanders quickly enough to ensure effective use of the security at the source concept."<sup>90</sup>

This confusion raises some obvious concerns. Because it does not explain how security at the source and security review are different concepts, the draft instruction does not guarantee that commanders will choose to resort to the first one instead of the other. Over the past decade, the military has felt much more comfortable with the process of reviewing media products to make sure that, indeed, journalists were not violating operational security. However, even with security review, many officers are not satisfied with the end result. For example, in a Joint Lessons Learned from DESERT STORM, U.S. CENTCOM Public Affairs Captain Ron Wildermuth, USN, argued: "Under the system of security review that was in place, OPSEC violations, i.e., unit locations, readiness of units, capabilities

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of units were divulged . . . ground rules could not be enforced and the military had no recourse against violators.”<sup>91</sup> The draft instruction needs not only to clearly define security at the source v. security review, but also to instruct commanders and public affairs officers as to what the policy is for different types of circumstances. Indeed, in some situations, such as a humanitarian assistance operation or an operation against a relatively unsophisticated foe (Somalia or Haiti), the military should not attempt to restrict media use of their own transmission devices. But, in a conflict where electronic warfare matters (such as Iraq or in Korea), the military might resort to security review and restrict or ban media transmission devices on operational security grounds.

In considering this issue, several developments must be taken into account. First, with the growing sophistication and miniaturization of satellite communication devices, the media increasingly have the technical ability to transmit on their own. This development will make it harder for the military to impose security review, because it cannot control the transmission of reports. However, it is my belief, based on past media behavior, that essentially all the media would comply with a security review process if the military established one. Second, and maybe more importantly, the military, itself, may not want to institute security review. Running a large scale security review process (as in DESERT STORM) is extremely time and resource consuming for the military. The security review caused long delays in the delivery of news. It is not clear how, in the future, commanders will be able (or even willing) to dedicate a substantial part of their assets to a mission that will hurt military-media relations.

*The Question of Assets.* The dedication of sufficient assets to support public affairs operations has always been a problem. In the past decade, military commanders sought to provide all assets while restricting (if not forbidding) the use of media-owned capabilities for transport and communications. During Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama, the Pentagon did not dedicate enough

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communication assets to enable timely transmission of pool material. During DESERT STORM, the system for transporting and transmitting pool products worked so poorly that, according to the *Post's* Getler, almost none of the pool stories made it back to the newspaper in time for publication.<sup>92</sup>

The 1992 agreement sought a remedy to those problems. The eighth principle reads:

Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs with facilities to enable timely, secure, compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communication systems operated by news organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.<sup>93</sup>

This provision represents a major victory for the media. For example, during the Gulf War, journalists could not take their own communication devices when they went to visit the troops. The same conditions applied to those who were in pools covering the ground offensive.

But, the draft instruction does not seem to subscribe to such an approach. In the vein of earlier policy, the directive tasks the CINCs with "providing all necessary assets" (personnel, facilities, equipment, transportation, and communications) to support public affairs activities.<sup>94</sup> Although recognizing past problems, the directive seeks to resolve them in a traditional way: i.e., by increasing military logistic support to the media. But in a seeming contradiction with the 1992 agreement, the draft instruction does not cover media use of independent communications facilities. However, Kilgallen stated that the joint doctrine will explicitly include this provision, because it is absolutely necessary. Charles Ricks, who wrote the original draft of the DoD directive, argued: "The instinctive military need for control is irrelevant in the face of an institution which can field, depending on the size of the operation, thousands of

reporters who are equipped with instantaneous communications capabilities.”<sup>95</sup> The goal of the new policy is to encourage commanders to accept those independent means of communication and to teach them to manage their utilization on the battlefield.

Just how well those requirements will improve asset dedication is unclear. Two conditions might prove helpful. First, if planners can anticipate a reasonable and limited number of reporters, they will be more successful in planning adequate support.<sup>96</sup> Second, allowing media representatives to operate their own communication devices will alleviate the military’s burden for hosting reporters: notably the work load, dedication of personnel and financial costs. Moreover, when the military does not have enough assets to support journalist demands, access to and freedom to use their own means to file stories and move around the battlefield will reduce media criticism and anger. The directive and the doctrine need to provide guidance concerning instances when radio (and other electronic) signals are of serious concern, such as in DESERT STORM, and, on the other hand, to establish under which circumstances the media will be allowed to use their own communication devices.

*Improving the Planning and Coordination Process for a Better Success.* The main lesson Pete Williams drew from the Gulf War deals with the utmost importance of having a good plan. “If I had one lesson to draw from the Gulf War, I would say: planning. Planning is essential, absolutely critical to the success of public affairs operations. Most of our problems during the Gulf War occurred because of planning shortcomings.”<sup>97</sup>

The current draft provision does not affect the procedure according to which CINCs are the only relevant authority to decide whether and how to accommodate reporters unless the CINC receives a direct order from the Secretary of Defense (or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff backed by the Secretary of Defense). But the draft instruction defines under which conditions planning is likely to lead to a successful public affairs campaign. First, public affairs

planning should occur in parallel with operational planning; the two should occur in concert. The potential benefits may seem obvious. Public affairs officers would be better equipped to advise their commanders and to plan for real media opportunities. But practice has regularly showed that this parallel planning is not easy to achieve, mainly because few commanders include public affairs officers in the compartmented planning process.

The draft instruction tasks the CINCs with a multidimensional public affairs planning effort: most importantly, plans should include an assessment of media requirements (including a forecast of potential surges in media activities) and planning for adequate resources (including options to meet unforeseen requirements). The draft instruction reads: “Commanders shall ensure that the operations planning process includes public affairs assessments that precisely identify the resource requirement.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore CINCs are tasked with assessing as precisely as possible the number of journalists likely to cover their operation. An accurate prediction should enable the military to plan for adequate transport, communication and personnel support. In this regard, the draft instruction reads: “News media interest will vary, and military support packages must be able to accommodate surges in news media activities. The goal is to anticipate and respond to fluctuating coverage and to tailor resources to ensure no loss of efficiency.”<sup>99</sup>

The draft instruction also deals with the sensitive issue of the coordination process between CINCs and the ATSD (PA), who is not in the chain of command and is unlikely to ever be so. However, ATSD (PA) is supposed to be in the chain of communication. And the draft instruction reasserts this point. Since 1990, CINCs have been obligated to coordinate with ATSD (PA) and seek approval for “all public affairs activities.”<sup>100</sup> This obligation, however, did not preclude recurring problems between CENTCOM in Riyadh and Pete Williams’s office during the Gulf War. In most cases, ASD (PA) Williams was unable to assert any real authority over CENTCOM. The most Williams’s office ever

gained was a few more pool slots for journalists. The draft instruction slightly modifies the current situation. It strongly reasserts that ATSD (PA) is part of the chain of communication when stating "ATSD (PA) shall review, coordinate, approve and disseminate public affairs guidance, public affairs plans and public affairs annexes."<sup>101</sup> It imposes new policy standards on the CINCs (the principle of open and independent coverage, for example). It is unclear that this provision will alter the balance of power between the CINCs (and uniformed military) and the ATSD (PA), especially if a commander does not follow the policy.

### **A Discussion of the Applicability of the New Principles.**

Even if the draft DoD instruction is unsigned and the joint doctrine is still in the coordination process, the pillars of this new policy have already been used in two small-scale operations, during Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (designed to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office in Haiti, September 1994) and during Operation UNITED SHIELD (the evacuation of U.N. personnel from Somalia in March 1995).

*Lessons Learned.* The lessons learned from these two military operations give some reasons for optimism. In both cases, public affairs plans implemented some of the draft instruction principles, most notably in terms of media access to the battlefield, operational security, and logistical support of public affairs operations.

The Annex F of UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (the canceled invasion of Haiti) called for several pools of reporters to be assigned to the invading forces while many other independent reporters were waiting in Port-au-Prince for the U.S. invasion. The plan had provisions so that pool and independent reporters would not cover the same actions.<sup>102</sup> Pool reporters got unique access (pools were included in the first five aircraft to assault the presidential palace) and received classified briefings from the Joint Task Force (JTF) commanding officer, U.S. Army Lieutenant General Hugh

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Shelton. Independent reporters did not have access to these briefings and were only scheduled to go in with the third wave of invading forces. Public Affairs Officer U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Michael Wood viewed this arrangement as highly successful, mainly because pool reporters were “amazed at the amount of access they got.”<sup>103</sup> In at least one case, aboard the amphibious assault ship Wasp (LHD-1), pool and independent reporters were co-located and it is unclear just how different their access to the battlefield would have been. Even the independent reporters received classified briefings on the planned invasion the night before the assault was to occur.<sup>104</sup> During Operation UNITED SHIELD, U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General Anthony Zinni accommodated a pool of about 20 reporters aboard the JTF’s ships (in addition to journalists aboard coalition ships, such as the Italians and French) while many independent reporters were waiting for its forces on the beaches of Mogadishu. Though some pool reporters complained that they did not receive enough preferential treatment, Zinni concluded that the dual arrangement worked well.<sup>105</sup>

Both operations also provided a test of applicability for the principle of security at the source to protect operational security. During UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, the pool (and some independents) received classified briefings prior to the invasion that was halted at the last moment. The military did not apply a security review process to make sure that reporters would not reveal classified details. Instead, they submitted the journalists to a temporary embargo on reporting information. Jacqueline Sharkey, a sharp critic of the security review process, wrote positively about the Haiti experience. As she noted, “The pool was given classified information by high-ranking officials, including LTG Henry Hugh Shelton, commander of the operation. Other than an embargo until the start of the invasion, there were no restrictions on what we could report or how we could report it.”<sup>106</sup> General Zinni also applied the principle of security at the source during UNITED SHIELD. This choice constitutes a major step forward. In the past decade, the Pentagon did not hesitate to use security review even when it did not need it to protect operational security.<sup>107</sup> These

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two experiences reassured the media. Journalists considered both experiences as an example of the Pentagon's good faith on the issue of operational security. AP's Jonathan Wolman, for example, considered that the Pentagon acted in conformity with the 1992 agreement. "They [the military] did not abuse the security review in any respect and, in several instances, they did not do security review."<sup>108</sup>

Finally in both cases, public affairs plans authorized reporters, both pools and independent, to use their own communication systems to transmit their material. In the case of UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, public affairs officers also had their own sophisticated devices, such as portable computers, modems, faxes, telephones, and satellite dishes. All journalists could use them. The combination of military and civil communication devices enabled the timely transmission of copy, videos, and photographs from Haiti to the United States. In the case of UNITED SHIELD, the situation was more complex. The operation took place in a remote location. Local logistical capacity to support reporters was minimal and fragile. Reporters assigned to cover the operation could not carry a lot of equipment because of space limitations. General Zinni, though, agreed that journalists could bring a satellite dish ashore with them because "reporters live to file their stories."<sup>109</sup> In both cases, journalists were satisfied with the arrangements.

*The Limits of These Experiences.* UPHOLD DEMOCRACY and UNITED SHIELD provide encouraging tests of military-media relations on the battlefield and the draft DoD policy. On at least three major issues, public affairs plans took into account the new trends in the 1992 agreement and the draft instruction. This is quite an achievement. During the Panama invasion (1989), which, by the objectives and the adversary's capabilities, was not too dissimilar to the (planned) invasion of Haiti, the public affairs plan imposed very strict restrictions on the media. One can say that after the bilateral negotiations of 1992, a new era of military-media relations has begun.<sup>110</sup>

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These experiences, however, were too limited in time and scope to draw any definitive conclusions for a more intense battlefield environment. First, these operations were very short. While UPHOLD DEMOCRACY lasted 6 months, the tense, near-battlefield environment lasted perhaps a week, and UNITED SHIELD had U.S. troops ashore in Somalia also for just a few days. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether and how these provisions would have worked over the long term. Second, in UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, some of these provisions could not really be tested as the overall operation changed at the very last minute from a combat to a permissive, noncombat operation. In consequence, USACOM released the pool 2 hours before the H-Hour, and pool and independent reporters were mixed in actual coverage. Though public affairs officers in charge of the operation were optimistic,<sup>111</sup> it is difficult to assess how the dual system of pool/independent reporters would have worked. Finally in both cases, the “enemy” could not seriously challenge the U.S. military. Such overwhelming force in the face of a weak enemy allows the U.S. military more latitude to organize media relations and “experiment” with new, more liberal approaches. That this frame of mind will remain in the face of a more sophisticated enemy or during a politically controversial operation remains to be seen.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations.**

The 1992 agreement and the current draft instruction have already produced significant results. For the first time, media organizations have worked together to defend what they view as their collective rights and presented a set of standards that many believe should govern coverage of U.S. military operations. Until 1992, the media had been unwilling and/or unable to take such a step. As AP's Wolman noted, the media has a deep-rooted reluctance for acting together: “We are all competitors and we don't meet in committee as a natural state of affairs. That group came together literally in crisis over the outrageous combat coverage conditions set in the Gulf War, but we don't

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pretend to be an everyday committee. Most of our organizations are proud and insistent to stand up for themselves under most circumstances.”<sup>112</sup> For once, the various organizations spoke with one voice. For the first time, the media and the military have agreed on a general set of principles. Both parties now have at their disposal a tool to judge and measure the other’s actions: its commitment to the rules agreed upon or its failure to abide by them. For the first time, finally, the military-media controversy has led to the development of a comprehensive policy on media access to the battlefield. Long-time observers of the controversy will note that the principles agreed upon in 1992 were not so different from the principles proposed about 10 years ago by the Sidle commission. Ten years of recurring controversy and three major conflicts (Grenada, Panama and the Gulf War) have been needed to move these from recommendations to policy statement. This should be viewed as a first positive step. It should not be considered an achievement, as the only policy documents that will ultimately matter for the future are the draft instruction and the joint public affairs doctrine that should be promulgated sometime in 1996.

Some gray areas remain, as the draft instruction departs from the 1992 agreement between the Pentagon and the media, at least in two areas. First, the current draft instruction does not set any limitations on the use of pools and leaves it to the CINCs to decide whether circumstances are appropriate or not to resort to pools. But the draft instruction provisions leave the door largely open to using pools as a way to limit and not to grant access. It leaves the commander with only the pool option to limit press access if too many reporters want to take a trip to war. In the current environment, however, commanders have not set up pools to restrict access, but either to grant access to activities that the press would not otherwise witness (the planned invasion of Haiti in 1994 and UNITED SHIELD in March 1995) or to ensure protection of journalists at the request of the press (Somalia, October 1993). Those experiences, though limited in time and scope, could help shape a new attitude among commanders regarding the use of pools, even in large-scale

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combat operations. However, the draft doctrine leaves the door open for far more restrictive arrangements. Second, the current draft instruction neither subscribes to nor rejects the possibility of media people carrying and operating their own communication devices on the battlefield. In the current environment, this is already done. In Haiti and in Somalia, media organizations operated their own devices. However, it is unclear that commanders would agree to let the press use them in situations where electromagnetic signals matter (such as in the Gulf War.)

Finally, neither the 1992 agreement nor the draft instruction take into account some very important issues that need at least to be explored as possible alternate remedies to the recurrent problems.

*Numerical Limitation.* The military and the media should agree on a numerical limitation on reporters assigned to cover combat operations. Such a limitation will serve both the military and the media's interests. It will enable the military to make more accurate predictions over what kind of accommodations it needs to plan for. To be able to provide accommodations and logistical support for the press, the military needs to know what to expect in advance and to plan for media requirements so the necessary assets can be allocated.

Working with a limited number of press representatives will definitively eliminate the issue of limiting access by pooling—which has been the media's goal for nearly a decade. The military can hardly accommodate hundreds of reporters who want to cover an operation. As long as a limit is not agreed upon, pools will be used and remain the only available tool to limit access.

*A New Accreditation System.* Limiting numbers could occur through a simple accreditation process which would take into account the reporter's proficiency. Today, all a reporter requires for accreditation is association with a U.S. media outlet. Both the military and the press have a common interest in a better accreditation system. The military could be more confident that reporters covering a

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military operation possessed adequate knowledge to do so professionally. For the press, a new accreditation system would ensure that better qualified reporters would be first in the area to witness operations; these reporters would likely provide a better informed picture of what is going on. This would avoid the type of situation that occurred in the Gulf War when a reporter from *Mirabella* (a fashion magazine) went into the pool while reporters from *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* were stuck in Dhahran.

*Communication Assets.* The presence of sophisticated communication devices on or near the battlefield is a foreseeable cause of problems. Currently, the draft instruction does not address this issue. The DoD should expand efforts to develop appropriate and realistic policy and procedures on these communication devices.

*Multinational Operations.* U.S. military operations are increasingly multinational in nature, and frequently involve the U.N. Just as with every other aspect of military activity, this "combined" nature of operations adds complexity to the military-media relationship. Specific problems due to multinational operations thus need addressing. One of the most important questions concerns the accreditation process of coalition members' reporters to cover U.S. forces and activities. So far, except in the case of UNITED SHIELD, the U.S. military has made no efforts to grant access to foreign (especially non-English speaking) reporters. This policy needs to change.

The DoD draft instruction also does not address how the public affairs community should handle differences between U.S., allied, and U.N. approaches to the media in terms of media access to operations and release of information. Do U.S. units assigned to U.N. operations follow U.N. public affairs guidance (likely to reduce access to operations) or follow U.S. public affairs guidance (at the risk of antagonizing allies)?

The draft instruction and the draft joint public affairs doctrine represent a step forward in the DoD approach to

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military-media relations. But significant shortfalls exist in these drafts that hopefully will be addressed in the process of final coordination. Finally, there is the simple fact that these key documents remain at the draft stage 3 years after the conclusion of the DoD-media negotiations. It is time to bring them to completion.

## ENDNOTES

1. This monograph focuses primarily on the question of press access to combat operations. Press access to humanitarian assistance and other non-combat operations has not created, in general, the same tension since both the military and the press generally agree over the rules: unlimited press access, a simple accreditation system, and access to units based on a first-arrived, first-served basis. Even in humanitarian assistance operations, however, military-media crises can erupt. The opening days of Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia created a storm of criticism when journalists met Marines and U.S. Navy SEALs with bright lights on the beach in the middle of the night. For the author's thoughts on this incident, see: "The Military and the Media in Restore Hope," *American Sentinel*, February 21, 1993, p. 6.

2. The author is well aware that these terms distort reality, as there hardly are such unitary entities as "the military" and "the press." Especially the latter is heavily divided, but even within the military there are major differences between services and branches of services on top of differences between individuals' perceptions of the press. However, for the purpose of clarifying, I will use these terms and hope that the reader understands how broad-brush they are.

3. The following organizations repeatedly demanded negotiations with the Reagan administration: American Newspapers Publishers Association (ANPA), American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME), American Society of Newspapers Editors (ASNE), Associated Press Managing Editors (APME), Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press, Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), and Radio-Television News Directors Association. Those organizations also co-authored the "Statement of Principles on Press Access to Military Operations," Washington, DC: January 1984.

4. "Media Organizations Take a Stand," *Editor and Publisher*, January 14, 1984, p. 18.

5. See, for example, Drew Middleton, "Barring Reporters from the Battlefield," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 5, 1984, p. 37; Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines, Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Military and the Media*, New York: Priority Press, 1985; Saul Friedman, "White House Let Pentagon Cut Off News of Invasion," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 28, 1983, p. 14; Dan Rather, "The Press and Grenada," *Dan Rather Commentary*, CBS Radio Network, October 28, 1983; Robert Timberg, "Reagan Press Policy on Grenada Criticized," *Baltimore Sun*, October 29, 1983, p. 3; "Editors Protest to Pentagon," *The New York Times*, November 1, 1983, p. 16; Felix McKnight, "War and Journalists," *Journal of Commerce*, November 2, 1983, p. 4; Abe Mellinkoff, "Military and Press Relations," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 4, 1983, p. 60; Jerry Friedheim, "Censor Journalists Covering Wars?", *U.S. News and World Report*, November 14, 1983, p. 33; Jessica Cato, "Publisher's Note," *Washington Journalism Review*, October 1983, p. 4.

6. Many articles referred to the superiority of American democracy, portrayed as the most accomplished in the world. See for example, "Grenada: Free the Press," *Baltimore Sun*, November 2, 1983; James Reston, "Reagan and the Press," *The New York Times*, November 2, 1983, p. 31; "Media Censorship In Grenada," *NBC Nightly News*, October 31, 1983; "Censoring Confidence," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1983; Henry Catto Jr., "Dateline Grenada: The Media and the Military Go at It," *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1983, p. C7. Some articles commented ironically on the exclusion of the press by the U.S. military while pretending to restore democracy on a previously Marxist island. See for example, Sandy Grady, "Covering the Battle with Pentagon Handouts," *The Denver Post*, October 28, 1983; "In War, the People Must Be Informed," *U.S.A Today*, November 2, 1983. See also cartoons in *Kansas City Times*, November 3, 1983.

7. Letter to the Secretary of Defense, April 29, 1991, reprinted in Hedrick Smith, ed., *The Media and the Gulf War: The Press and Democracy in Wartime*, Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1991, p. 378.

8. The mainstream media considered the option of the constitutional argument, but finally decided against it. Only Larry Flynt went to court in 1984, challenging the constitutionality of the ban. A few other left-wing journals agreed with the argument.

9. "The Plaintiffs seek an injunction prohibiting Defendants from preventing or otherwise hindering Plaintiffs from sending reporters to the sovereign nation of Grenada to gather news . . . and they seek a declaration that the course of conduct engaged in by the Defendants . . . in preventing Plaintiffs, or otherwise hindering Plaintiff's efforts to send reporters to the sovereign nation of Grenada for the purpose of gathering news is in

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violation of the Constitution (sic) laws and treaties of the United States," in *Flynt v. Weinberger*, 588 F. Supp., June 21, 1984, p. 58.

10. *The Nation, et al. v. the United States DoD*, 762 F. Supp., April 16, 1991, p. 1561.

11. William Hammond, "The News Media and the Military," in John E. Jessup and Louise B. Ketz, ed., *Encyclopedia of the American Military*, Vol. III, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994, p. 2095.

12. Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines*, p. 27.

13. Clarence R. Wyatt, *Paper Soldiers: The American Press and the Vietnam War*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 200.

14. Survey by *The Los Angeles Times*, November 12-17, 1983. Data provided by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

15. Survey by Roper Organization, December 3-10, 1983. Data provided by the Roper Center.

16. See Carl Session Stepp, "In the Wake of Grenada," *The Quill*, March 1984, pp. 12-15; and David Gergen, "The Message to the Media," *Public Opinion*, April-May 1984, pp. 5-8.

17. Survey by *The Los Angeles Times*, November 12-17, 1983. Data provided by the Roper Center.

18. Survey by ABC News, December 8, 1983. Data provided by the Roper Center.

19. Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, *Principles of Information*, DoD, December 1, 1983.

20. Vice-Admiral Joseph Metcalf, USN (Ret.), "The Press and Grenada: 1983," in Peter Young, ed., "Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, December 1991, pp. 169-170.

21. Michael Burch, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (1983-85), interview with the author, Washington, October 11, 1993.

22. Robert Sims, former spokesman for the National Security Council, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, interview with the author, Washington, March 19, 1992.

23. "Report to CJCS Military-Media Relations Panel (Sidle Panel)," in Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines*, p. 163.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-168.

26. Colonel Robert O'Brien, ASD (PA), included in his testimony to the Sidle panel the idea of creating a pre-established pool (i.e., a group of media people selected to accompany the military on operations). The media representatives were extremely reluctant and voiced concern, but all agreed that it could be a good last-resort opportunity when no other way of obtained access is feasible. See "Media-Military Hindsight on Grenada," *Broadcasting*, February 13, 1984, p. 79.

27. Ground rules describe what information reporters covering military operations should not release. Guidelines describe the general conditions under which media ought to operate on the battlefield.

28. "DoD National Pool Ground Rules," *DoD National Media Pool Deployers' Information Package*, DoD handout for reporters participating in the national media pool in the October-December 1993 rotation.

29. See William G. Ackerly, *Analysis of the Pentagon's Press Pool Tests*, MA Thesis, University of Kansas, 1987, pp. 40-41.

30. See Fred Hoffman, "Review of the Panama Pool Deployment: December 1990," in Jacqueline Sharkey, *Under Fire: U.S. Military Restrictions on the Media from Grenada to the Persian Gulf*, Washington: The Center for Public Integrity, 1991, Appendix C, p. 4.

31. See Lieutenant Commander Gregory Hartung, USN, *Now Is Time to Plan for Media Pools*, Individual Study Project, Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1989, p. 10.

32. William G. Ackerly, *Analysis of the Pentagon's Press Pool Tests*, p. 26.

33. Michael A. Palmer, *On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf*, Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1992, especially Chapter 11, "Not While This President Serves: The Reflagging Decision," pp. 103-119; and Chapter 12, "The Tanker War," pp. 120-134. See also Barry Rubin, "Drowning in the Gulf," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1987-1988, pp. 120-134; and George Stewart, Scott M. Fabbri, and Adam B. Siegel, *JTF Operations Since 1983*, CRM 94-42, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, July 1994.

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34. Admiral Harold Bernsen, Commander Middle East Forces, interview with the author, Alexandria, VA, August 26, 1993.

35. Fred Hoffman, a former Associated Press Pentagon correspondent for 22 years, was then Deputy ASD (PA). Interview with the author, Washington, March 17, 1993.

36. Operation PRAYING MANTIS was an operation within EARNEST WILL, commanded by the same Joint Task Force, in retaliation for damages caused by Iranian mines to a U.S. frigate (*Samuel Roberts*) on April 14. See Hans S. Pawlisch, "Operation Praying Mantis," Appendix A, in Palmer, *On Course to Desert Storm*, pp. 141-146; Bud Langston and Don Bringle, "Operation Praying Mantis: The Air View," *U.S.N.I. Proceedings*, May 1989, pp. 54-65; J. B. Perkins III, "Operation Praying Mantis: The Surface View," pp. 66-70; John H. Admire, "A Report on the Gulf," *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1988, pp. 56-61; and William M. Rakow, "Marines in the Gulf—1988," pp. 62-68.

37. Dan Howard, interview with the author, Washington, April 15, 1993. The anecdote was confirmed in later interview with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowe, interview with the author, Washington, August 17, 1993.

38. For a more detailed examination by this author of military-media relations during JUST CAUSE, see Pascale M. Combelles, "Operation Just Cause: A Military-Media Fiasco," *Military Review*, May-June 1995, pp. 77-85.

39. This is standard operating procedure. The military does not typically send personnel into combat situations without an operational reason. Escorting journalists is not an operational necessity that would compel media escorts and other personnel to risk exposure to combat situations.

40. Fred Hoffman had been the Associated Press Pentagon correspondent for 22 years, before becoming a Deputy ASD (PA) between 1987 and 1989. His long experience with the military, his knowledge of the media and of the national pool—which he had helped put into fact—made him a perfect reviewer.

41. Fred Hoffman, "Review of Panama Pool Deployment: December 1989," in Jacqueline Sharkey, *Under Fire*, p. 17.

42. "Annex F, Planning Guidance—Public Affairs," in *JCS Pub 5-02.2*, March 30, 1990, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991, p. 246.

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43. Using those rosters, the military came up with the figure of about 1,600 journalists accredited to the Saudi Arabian theater of operations. However, the accounting procedure raises some questions for two reasons. First, those rosters included the names of every person in a media team, so each name did not represent a journalist. Second, many journalists registered at multiple JIBs at the same time to be granted access to all briefings and media opportunities. The 1,600 figure is therefore probably inflated.

44. Captain James B. Brown, USA, "Media Access to the Battlefield," *Military Review*, July 1992, p. 16.

45. John Fialka, a *Wall Street Journal* correspondent among the few ten percent of reporters allowed in the pools during the Gulf War, wrote that the military courier system was "aptly dubbed the "pony express," in *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, p. 5.

46. Fialka, *Hotel Warriors*, p. 5.

47. DoD, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, Final Report to Congress*, Washington: Government Printing Office, April 1992, p. S-4.

48. According to a memo by the Department of the Army, the pool should not have been deployed at this point since more than a hundred reporters were in Panama covering the operations. But "the deployment shows Secretary Cheney's support for the pool concept," Department of the Army, *Deployment of the DoD Media Pool on Nimrod Dancer-Information Memorandum*, May 12, 1989. Copy provided to the author.

49. See Fred Hoffman, "Review of the Panama Pool Deployment: December 1989," reprinted in Jacqueline Sharkey, *Under Fire*, p. 7-9.

50. In a letter of protest to Secretary of Defense Cheney, several media organizations wrote: "Our cooperation in Pentagon pool arrangements since the Sidle commission has been based on an understanding that pools would provide emergency coverage of short duration. Clearly, in Desert Storm, the military establishment embraced pools as a long-term way of life. The pool system was used in the Persian Gulf War not to facilitate coverage but to control it." Reprinted in Hedrick Smith, ed., *The Media and the Gulf War*, p. 378.

51. The term national pool refers to the standing DoD national news media pool, as created in 1985. The term 'regional pool' designates pools (groups of journalists) set up locally to cover operations.

52. The military resorted to these same features for the media arrangements of operations like DESERT STORM or EARNEST WILL.

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In addition, the Defense Department has developed the practice of granting exclusive priority to the pool over independent reporters. During Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama, the military protected the pool against hundreds of journalists flying in the country. Incoming reporters were kept on a military base because there were not enough public affairs personnel to provide escorts and opportunities. During DESERT STORM, the military arrested and detained independent reporters who did not follow pool rules.

53. The case of the B-52 units during the Gulf War perfectly illustrates the last point. The units were located in England, Diego Garcia (British island), Spain, Saudi Arabia and the United States. In all cases, no reporters were allowed near the bases. The U.S. base on Diego Garcia had a long standing no-press policy. The Saudis did not want any publicity, for "strategic bombers" inevitably were linked to nuclear warfare in their minds. The Spaniards did not want to aggravate the anti-American sentiment in the country. And the United States feared that coverage of the B-52 would bring back memories of Vietnam.

54. Pascale M. Combelles, "Operation Just Cause: A Military-Media Fiasco."

55. Major Kenneth S. Plato, USMC, *Military-Media Relations: First Impressions of Operation Desert Shield*, Individual Study Project, Newport, RI: Naval War College, February 11, 1995, p. 12.

56. In this regard, Operation PRAYING MANTIS was quite an achievement for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. See earlier discussion of Operation EARNEST WILL.

57. Letter to the Honorable Dick Cheney, April 29, 1991, reprinted in Hedrick Smith, *The Media and the Gulf War*, p. 378. The ad-hoc group involved Washington bureau chiefs concerned that CENTCOM media policy would become standard operating procedure for the next war. The group included the Washington bureau chiefs of *Chicago Tribune* (Richard Harrock), *The News York Times* (Howell Raines), *The Washington Post* (Michael Getler), *The Wall Street Journal* (Albert R. Hunt), *The Los Angeles Times* (Jack Nelson), Cox Newspapers (Andrew Glass), Knight-Ridder (Clark Hoyt), Hearst Newspapers (Charles Lewis), *Newsweek* (Even Thomas), *Time* (Stanley Cloud), CBS News (Barbara Cohen), NBC News (Timothy J. Russert), ABC News (George Watson), CNN (William Headline), and Associated Press (Jonathan Wolman).

58. *Covering the Persian Gulf*, unpublished report to Secretary Cheney, June 1991, p. 10.

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59. *Statement of Principles*, unpublished media proposal for combat coverage guidelines.

60. Jonathan Wolman, Associated Press Washington bureau chief, interview with the author, Washington: September 28, 1995.

61. Jonathan Wolman, Associated Press, interview, September 28, 1995.

62. *Agreement on War Coverage Guidelines*, Associated Press News Release, May 21, 1992.

63. See Robert Pear, "Military Revises Rules to Assure Reporters Access to Battle Areas," *The New York Times*, May 22, 1992, p. A8.

64. When he took office, Les Aspin downgraded (at least bureaucratically) the status of public affairs in DoD. He changed the ASD (PA) to ATSD (PA). The roles, missions and responsibilities have essentially remained the same. In addition to the bureaucratic downgrading, the personal tie between the Secretary of Defense and his Assistant for Public Affairs has also weakened. While Pete Williams had a long-term relationship with and direct access to Secretary Cheney, the Clinton administration DoD has had four ATSD (PA) and two Secretaries of Defense in 3 years. It is not hard to conclude from the combination of the lower bureaucratic and personal status, that PA has a lower priority in today's DoD.

65. DoD draft instruction, "Procedures for Joint Public Affairs Operations," undated, p. 7.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

70. *Ibid.*

71. George Watson, ABC News, interview with the author, Washington, October 2, 1995.

72. Brian Kilgallen, ATSD (PA) Plans Officer. He was not directly involved in the 1991-92 negotiations with the media, but witnessed the process. He is now working on the joint public affairs doctrine development. Interview with the author, The Pentagon, October 3, 1995.

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73. Ronald L. Shultz, *Combat Media Coverage Principles: Doomed to Failure?*, Individual Study Project, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 1993, p. 29.

74. DoD Draft instruction, p. 4-5.

75. *Covering the Persian Gulf*, p. 7.

76. Report by CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel, in Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines*, p. 166.

77. DoD draft instruction, p. 7.

78. Brian Kilgallen, ATSD (PA), Plans Officer, interview with the author, October 3, 1995.

79. *Pentagon Adopts Combat Coverage Principles*, DoD News Release, No. 241-92, May 21, 1992.

80. Michael Getler, *The Washington Post*, interview with the author, Washington, October 5, 1995.

81. Brian Kilgallen, ATSD (PA) Plans Officer, interview, October 3, 1995.

82. "Testimony of Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, U.S. DoD," in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War*, p. 10.

83. Operational security ground rules consist of a list of categories of information the press should refrain from publishing. For Operation DESERT STORM, the security ground rules included: "specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapons system, on-hand equipment, or supplies. Unit size and number of amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms; any information that reveals details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or canceled operations; information, photography, and imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments; rules of engagement details; information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods and results; specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security of lives; identification of mission aircraft points of origin other than as land-or carrier-based; information on the effectiveness or the ineffectiveness of enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, fire, intelligence collection and security measures, specific identifying information on

missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue missions are planned or underway; Special Operations forces' methods and equipments; specific operating methods and tactics; information on operational or support vulnerabilities that could be used against U.S. forces, such as details of major battle damage or personnel losses of specific or coalition units until released by CENTCOM," in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War*, p. 465.

84. In the last case, the news organization agreed with the Pentagon, that the report violated the ground rules and agreed not to publish it.

85. Michael Getler, *The Washington Post*, interview, October 5, 1995.

86. *Ibid.*

87. DoD Draft instruction, p. 4-5.

88. Brian Kilgallen, ATSD (PA) Plans Officer, interview, October 3, 1995.

89. "CENTCOM Guidelines for News Media," January 7, 1991, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to The Persian Gulf War*, p. 328.

90. Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS), Report number 51438-46100, "Public Affairs: Communications for Public Affairs," March 7, 1991. Obtained by Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

91. JULLS 62170-35010, "Ground Rules Enforcement: Security Review Process," June 20, 1991. Obtained via FOIA request.

92. Michael Getler, *The Washington Post*, interview, October 5, 1995.

93. *Pentagon Adopts Combat Coverage Principles*, DoD News Release.

94. DoD draft instruction.

95. Charles Ricks, *The Military-News Media Relationship: Thinking Forward*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1993, p. 2.

96. During the invasion of Panama, COL Sconyers (SOUTHCOM PA) planned to accommodate about 50 reporters. He based his estimate on the fact that the international airport of Panama City was scheduled

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to be closed for several weeks after the initial assault. But, confronted with the controversy over access, the White House decided to allow three charter planes full of reporters to land in Panama City. Needless to say, SOUTHCOM did not have adequate support to take care of the incoming reporters.

97. Pete Williams, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (1989-93), interview with the author, Washington: October 19, 1995.

98. DoD draft instruction, p. 9.

99. *Ibid.*

100. "Annex F, Planning guidance—Public Affairs," in Joint Pub. 5-02.2, March 30, 1990, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War*, p. 249.

101. DoD draft instruction, p. 2.

102. The USACOM after-action report comments that "The public affairs (PA) plan for the operation called for the deployment of local, regional, and national reporters with individual units, and members of the Pentagon press corps in the National Media Pool (NMP). This model should be used in future operations, and the policy of open and independent media coverage should be continued." U.S. Atlantic Command, *CINCUSACOM Joint After Action Report (JAAR) on Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY*, 1995, p. 68. The JAAR provides an official overview of UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in addition to extracts from joint lessons learned derived from the operation.

103. LTC Mike Wood (USA), ATSD (PA) Plans Officer, interview with the author, The Pentagon, February 17, 1995.

104. Thomas Ricks, *Wall Street Journal* Pentagon correspondent, interview with the author, Washington, February 6, 1995. Ricks was aboard *Wasp* as an independent reporter focusing on the activities of the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) CARIB which operated in northern Haiti.

105. LTG Anthony Zinni (USMC), "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective," submitted to the *Marine Corps Gazette*.

106. Jacqueline Sharkey, "The Shallow End of the Pool?" *American Journalism Review*, December 1994, p. 44.

107. Indeed, SOUTHCOM maintained the security review process during the second and third day of the Panama invasion, even though U.S. troops were no longer in a combat situation.

108. Jonathan Wolman, Associated Press, Washington bureau chief, interview with author, September 28, 1995.

109. Lieutenant General Zinni, "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective."

110. As a recent study noted, "Judging from conflict/crisis operations since DESERT STORM, the military has finally learned its lesson with regard to news-media planning. The level of military/press cooperation in Somalia and Haiti was unprecedented." Frank Aukofer and VADM. William P. Lawrence, USN (ret.), *America's Team: The Odd Couple: A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*, Nashville, TN: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, Vanderbilt University, 1995, p. 45. This study, however, seems to read too much into these two experiences and does not question how the U.S. military might apply the same lessons in a more intense combat environment. Moreover, they only provide the viewpoint from higher headquarters, did not interview those involved on the ground, and do not discuss any of the military-media problems that did occur in these operations.

111. COL Barry Willey, U.S. Army, Joint Task Force 180 spokesman in Haiti, September-October 1994, interview with the author, Pentagon, March 2, 1995; LTC Michael H. Wood, OATSD (PA), Deputy Director of Plans, Pentagon, interview with author, February 17, 1995.

112. Jonathan Wolman, Associated Press, interview, September 28, 1995.

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